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Neighbours at the Gate: Exploration of Alternative Approaches to Refugee (Re)settlement and Integration in the Netherlands

Nadine Blankvoort MOT MSc. GH

ABSTRACT

In the Netherlands and Europe, there exist approaches to refugee (re)settlement where asylum seekers face long waiting periods, in large-scale centres often isolated from Dutch society, with little-to-no opportunity to structure their day or participate in activities which bring meaning to their lives. These activities, which bring meaning people's lives are termed *occupations* in the occupational therapy and occupation science literature. When the context hinders the opportunity to engage in these meaningful occupations, one experiences a situation of occupational injustice. These approaches taken in the Netherland and internationally creates the state of occupation injustice, this lack of ability to engage in meaningful activities, and this is turn has been documented to have negative effects on refugees health, well-being, identity and eventual inclusion in society.

Parallel to these standard approaches in the Netherlands, are alternative approaches to refugee resettlement and integration. These alternatives are often being facilitated by charities, community-based organizations and citizen initiatives. Alternative programs currently aim to counter the government programs and focus on safe passages, for vulnerable populations, with an emphasis on early inclusion in society, community placement, sponsorship, and integration from the time of arrival. These alternative programs claim to address the issues of lack of meaningful engagement and isolation as currently seen in standard procedures, thereby claiming to improve integration, inclusion and wellbeing.

This research aims to explore the lives and experiences of both the individuals living in, as well as the individuals facilitating these alternative programs. The research will explore how these programs are situated in and/or actively negotiating the broader context of refugee programs and policies in the Netherlands. This exploration will include the perspectives of the multiple actors involved, including service users and service providers, using a participatory methodology.

Through exploring the perspectives on alternative programs through a participatory evaluation format, we are able to explore these programs as they are

described, evaluated and experienced by the services users themselves. This allows for a grounded understanding of the programs and their further potential.

KEYWORDS [List 3 to 5 keywords]

Keyword 1	Refugees
Keyword 2	Asylum Seekers
Keyword 3	Citizen Initiatives
Keyword 4	Program Evaluation
Keyword 5	Participatory

SUBJECT CATEGORIES [Select 3 to 5 WoS Subject Categories that the paper covers. WoS Subject Categories can be found in the first column of Table 1]

WoS Subject Category 1	Social Issues
WoS Subject Category 2	Humanities, Multidisciplinary
WoS Subject Category 3	Anthropology
WoS Subject Category 4	Political Science
WoS Subject Category 5	Sociology

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